

5

T H E
ENGLISHMAN'S DUTY
TO CONTEND FOR
HIS BIRTHRIGHT.

A S E R M O N,
PREACHED AT THE
CHAPEL, IN GEE - STREET,
GOSWELL - STREET,

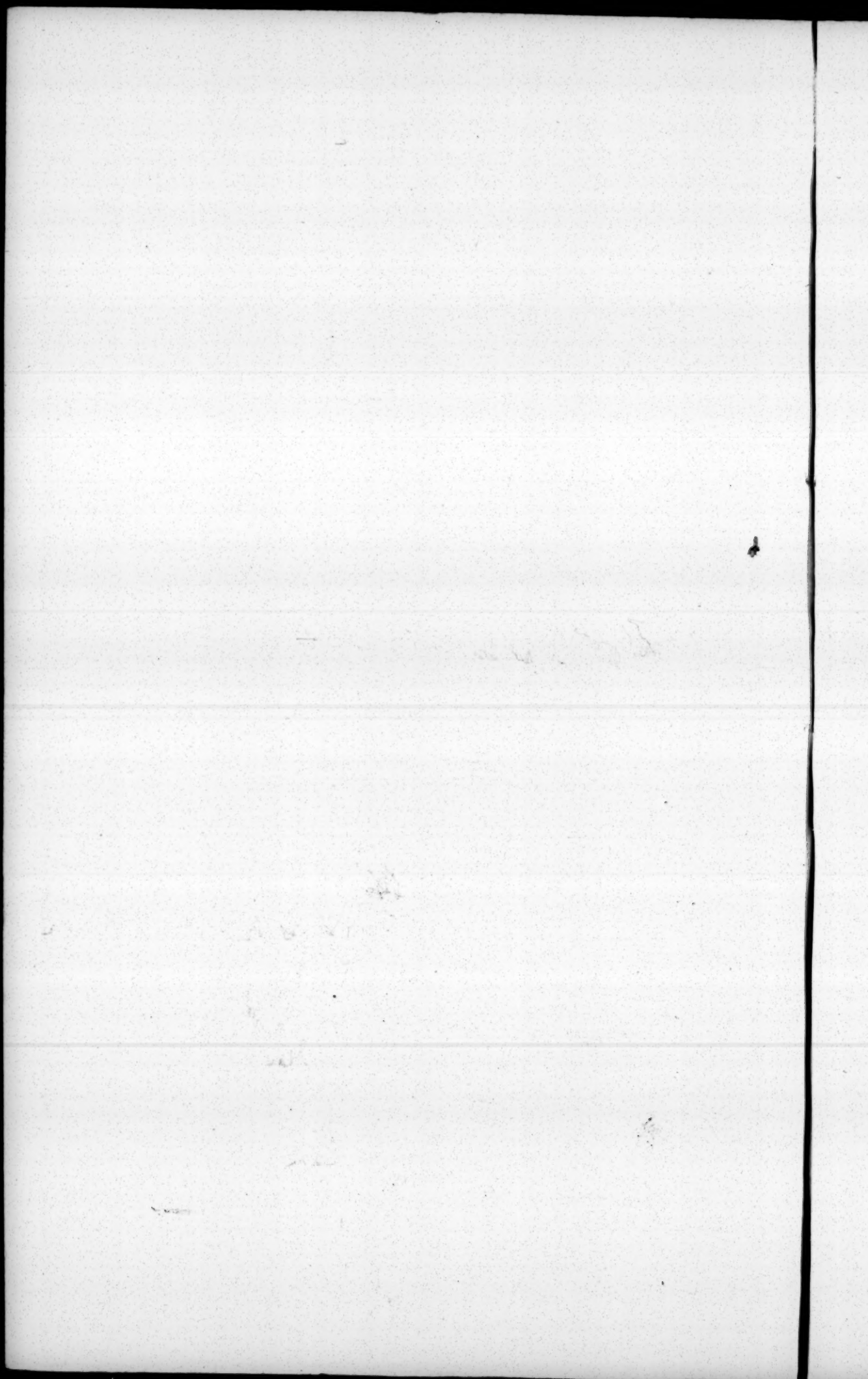
November 4th. 1795.

Being the Anniversary of the Glorious Revolution, 1688.

By the Rev. WILLIAM HOLLAND,
Minister of that Chapel, and Master of the Academy there.

TAKEN IN SHORTHAND BY JOB SIBLY.

Printed for and Sold by J. Burks, No. 74, Sun-Street, Bishopsgate ;
J. Smith, Portsmouth-Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields ; D. I. Eaton ;
No. 74, Newgate-Street ; Lee, 444, Strand ; T. Spence, Turn-
stile ; A. Serle, No. 11, Cumberland Street, Middlesex Hospital ;
F. Place, No. 13, Back of St. Clements ; T. G. Ballard, No. 3
Bedford Court, Covent Garden ; F. Ward, No. 41, Dean Street
Westminster ; and J. Baker, No. 35, Sutton-Street, Crown-
Street, Soho.



GALATIANS, 5. Chap. 1. Verse.

Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith
Christ has made us free, &c. &c.

A VERY slight acquaintance with the history of this Country, will be sufficient to convince us, that some centuries since, a galling yoke of Bondage, was on the Necks of our Forefathers, and though the Revolution we are to night met to celebrate, might perhaps be called but a partial removal of the disgraceful and painful Yoke, yet in itself properly considered, it must, by every lover of his Country, every friend to *Liberty and Freedom*, be considered as a great, important, and glorious event. It is an event which at once calls for the admiration, and claims the grateful recollection of Englishmen.

I am well aware that amongst the many imputations, cast upon Religion, by the *Atbeists* and *Deists* of our day, one of the most fashionable and popular, is, that it is inimical to the cause of civil LIBERTY, and calculated to

rivet more firmly the chains of Tyranny, and Oppression. To such an assertion as this, we give the lye direct, and to support ourselves in so doing, we need only advert, and that but slightly to the purport, and tenor of Christianity. Religion Sirs, is calculated to inform mankind in their best interests, and it directs how we may best secure them. If by some it be urged that it teaches Subjects submission; we answer, it also teaches Princes their duty.

It not only commands us as Subjects, to honor those who are set over us; but it reminds us that he who ruleth over Men should be just. It lays down such pertinent, suitable, and well adapted Rules, for the discharge of every duty in relative connection, and in civil Society, that were its principles universally attended to, and uniformly carried into practice, there would be no breaking in our Land; no going out in our Coasts; no complaining in our Streets; all around would be Harmony and Love, and the British Nation would in truth and verity, be one and indivisible. Were the principles of Religion attended to, they would teach us the sentiments of universal benevolence, and good will; no Man would then live for himself alone, each would consider himself as a part of the general whole

whole; and the welfare of that whole, would be the governing principle of his conduct.

A God of Love, would then approve the unity of his Creatures, he would feed us with the finest of the Wheat, and the complaints of the distressed Poor, would no longer strike our Ears, or wound the feelings of our Hearts.

Liberty is the birthright of Britons, and it is a precious deposit, it becomes them to hold most dearly. If I rightly understand the term Liberty, I would define it a free and uncontrouled, exercise of those rights which God and nature have conferred upon us.

Thus understanding Liberty, I would say sirs, turn your attention for a moment, to the nature, tenor, purport, and operation of religious Principles. These were they prevalent, would be in the breast of every Man, an insurmountable barrier to his infringing upon the rights of another, and would promote mutual affection, by an attention to mutual welfare.

Religious Principles would teach each rank its several duties, and enforce an attention to them, it would bind the people in the strongest band of amity, it would make our Land an astonish-

ment to the surrounding world, whilst it compelled them to say, "happy is that people for the Lord is their God." Whilst I am thus speaking of Religion, I would, by no means, be understood to mean any set of opinions, or modes of practice, fabricated by proud and designing Men, and adopted by the crafty, as an engine of the State. No sirs, 'tis not national Religion of any name we allude to, but the plain, unsullied, simple Religion of Jesus, unfettered with human opinions, unallied with temporal dignities. National Religions I most readily assert, even in the general, unfriendly to the cause of Liberty and Freedom, and indeed not less so to the cause of Christianity itself.

When Christianity was harrassed and oppressed in the Roman State, it maintained its ground against opposition, and through the successive reign of ten persecuting Emperors; it shone glorious in its native simplicity, and was at once the wonder, and admiration of the world. But sirs, when (I had almost said unfortunately for Religion) an Emperor became a Christian, and Religion grew in fashion at the Court, then its professors became specious, and its interests began to decline. Now lofty Catholics began to rear their heads: now episcopal

copal stalls, consecrated habits, splendid vestments, and anti apostolic Bishops, began to be known amongst Men. Temporal abundance began now to be annexed to spiritual Dignities, and hence the contest amongst these Men, was not, who should most loudly proclaim the truth, or most eminently adorn the doctrines of truth, but who should hold the wealthiest see, or fill the most powerful seat.

It was from this source the accursed anti-christ of Rome first drew his breath. When he first began to lift his head, his temporal possessions were but small, he therefore found it was necessary to the furtherance of his design, to engage the civil power on his side, and the superstition of mankind in those days not a little strengthened his plan. The Princes of the day gave largely to the Church of their revenues and possessions, the church in return lent them as freely her aid both of Blessing and of Curse, and hence was engendered that curious, mule like, animal, called in our days CHURCH and STATE.

However the craft of some, or the pride and power of others, may have led them to endeavour

deavour the effecting a union between civil and ecclesiastical Polity or Government, suffer me to say, and the Bible is my warrant, ('tis the Ministers act of Parliament) that such a connection is impossible, and therefore impracticable; civil and ecclesiastical Polity differ in their every part, and the difference is of such a nature as to admit of no removal, to suffer no reconciliation.

Human or civil Government, as to its foundation, rests upon civil connection, and owes its existence to the will of the one part delegating its power to the other, how superior is divine right, it rests upon indisputable authority, and is at once made known and supported by the inspired volume. I might also ask what are the objects upon which civil polity is to exercise its authority? the answer is, the external concerns of our persons, properties, and some part of our moral deportment. On the other hand spiritual Government, has for its object, the internal concerns and regarding only the hearts and consciences of men, can of course be fully exercised by God alone. There are concerns into which no consistorial courts can interfere, no archiepiscopal jurisdiction interfere, we may therefore add they differ in their heads, in the one an earthly

earthly Prince *Reigns* with created authority and by the assistance of his Counsellors, but in the other, Christ *Reigns* King alone and admits no equal in his Dominion, neither delegates his power to another.

Though some modern churches may exhibit a monstrous appearance like what is annually presented in our raree shows, a *two beaded Being*, yet sirs, in the kingdom or church of Christ the absurdity is unknown, and his members obey the command of their Lord, "call no man your master in spiritual things, for one is your master even God who is in Heaven," were I might add, perhaps some of his earthly representatives will never arrive.

Before I proceed, espescially to the text, suffer me to lay before you a few introductory propositions: and

First.—All men are born with the same natural rights and are equally entitled to all the privileges of Citizenship, in the country that gives them Birth.

The God of Creation, sirs, the father of the universe, knows no distinction between the Son of a Peasant and the Son of a King.—Formed of the same clay, they breathe the same air, need
the

the same support, and finally rot in the same dust; and if there be any distinction the one is supported by others, and the other by his own industry. Men can alone be distinguished, one above another, by the excellence of mental capacity or integrity of public conduct.

I would observe further, that those civil rights, privileges, and immunities as to their exercise, can only be lost by the mental incapacity or moral turpitude of the person to whom they belong, that is, by a want of capacity for their exercise in our reasoning powers, or a forfeiture of our right to them by a flagrant violation of constituted orders or laws.

I observe also, That every abridgement of our civil rights, privileges, and immunities, is most unquestionably an infringement upon our Liberties. This is a proposition so self evident, that I need not attempt its proof: I shall rather take the opportunity to say a word respecting a class of men, whose rights I conceive to be cruelly and unfairly restrained.—I mean the protestant Dissenters of this Land, who live in the midst of us as a set of proscribed men; What are their crimes, sirs,? I will tell you, they cannot conform in modes and rules to a church which they conceive too nearly imitates that of Rome,

Rome, they nobly dare to think for themselves, they say religious Worship is a sacred Offering tendered to God upon the conviction of conscience, and that it should be tendered in that form in which conscience directs the Offering.—These sirs, are among their crimes, they cannot adore consecrated bread and wine, they will not cross the forehead of their little ones, they dedicate them to God and leave them to find their crosses in the road of Life. The Dissenters, sirs, do not think it right that one who exhibits his apostolic labours, perhaps four times in a year, and rolls to and from the exertion in a splendid equipage, should possess an abundant income, whilst his poor Brother and fellow labourer, who bears the burden of the day, almost starves upon a poor and scanty pittance. They sirs, are weak enough to suppose that the humble worship of an upright heart is as acceptable to God, from the lowly conventicle as it would be in a lofty Cathedral, attended by pomp and supported by power.

For crimes like these, are their rights of Citizenship denied them, they are, by a test act, shut out from all place of honor and profit, but are left open to all that are attended with inconvenience, expence, and trouble.—But I proceed

B.

to

to observe further, that it was by adopting the principles we have already stated, that the Revolution was effected we are met to celebrate. It was produced by a glorious and noble assertion of our unalienable rights, and it well deserves our remembrance. Surely then if the Revolution may in any measure be esteemed a national benefit, we shall do well to stand fast to those principles which gave that Revolution birth, and this leads me to a consideration of my text from which I would—First take occasion to say, that all Revolutions of Kingdoms and States are under the governing providence of God. **SECONDLY:** That in the Revolution we are now commemorating, God might be said, in some senses, to have made this Nation free, **THIRDLY,—** That it is the duty of Christian Citizen, to stand fast in the Liberty wherewith god hath made him free.

FIRST, That all Revolutions in Kingdoms and States, are by and under God's Governing Providence.

To attempt the establishment of this proposition will be unnecessary if you believe the Bible, with those who do not, I shall not now enter the Lists, were I inclined so to do, easy would the task be to prove the truth “ Verily there is

a God that Judgeth the Earth ' He is said to rule in the Armies of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the Earth: his Kingdom is described as ruling over all: he is said to raise the Beggar from the dung-hill, to sit among Princes: (the conduct of some by the bye has not done much credit to their exhaltation) We are told he raised up Cyrus for his will: that he gave Israel a King in wrath, and took him away in his displeasure. Such expressions as these, clearly describe him as the Lord of all and that the serious mutations of the Earth are all by his good pleasure.

SECONDLY. That in the Revolution we are now commemorating, God, might, in some senses be said to have made this Nation free.

There are two points of view in which the propriety of this expression cannot but appear; We were by this Revolution set free from the Yoke of Papal authority and Superstition. If you are at all acquainted with the History of this Country, you will know that at this period a very powerful attempt was made again, to introduce Popery into this Land; James late Duke of York, then King of England, in defiance of the will and opinion of his people attempted to bear all before him with an outstretched arm &

Power, Forgetting the conduct of his predecessors, James the first, (who by the bye was not famed for condescension) but, who declared it his Highest Honor to be the Servant of the people *he I say attempted to be not merely their Master but to play the Tyrant, the strength of his head was unequal to the wickedness of his heart and he as meanly forsook the Cause as he had once insolently endeavoured to support it. So also we were set free from the Yoke of Arbitrary Power——Our fore fathers, happily for them and us, knew their rights and nobly dared to claim them. They established by their conduct a lasting contradiction to the thesis that "*Kings can do no wrong,*" and stamped eternal fallacy upon the assertion of a modern writer, "that they hold their Crowns in contempt of the People", In this Crisis of affairs, the Parliament of England proved themselves politically omnipotent, they declared the throne of these Kingdoms vacant and gave the Crown to William the third. Thus God might be said to have made this Nation free. He did it by setting upon the throne of Government a protestant prince, and by enabling our forefathers to enact
certain

* In the first Speech of JAMES the first, to his *English Parliament*, March, 22d. 1603. are the following Words, "That I am a SERVANT, is most true, I will never be ashamed to confess it my principal Honour, to be the *Great Servant* of the Common-wealth."——*Journals of the House of Commons.*

certain wise and Glorious regulations, which must ever be the Subject of admiration through succeeding ages, even if their operation should be restrained or perverted, we proceed to observe.

THIRDLY. *That it is the duty of the Christian Citizen, to Stand fast in the Liberty, where-with God has made him free.*

That it is our duty to stand fast in the possession and assertion of those principles which stand connected with our Civil and Religious Liberty, will appear, if we consider but for a Moment. **LIBERTY IS A PRECIOUS CHARTER BESTOWED UPON US BY HEAVEN.** The Heathens of old, who held a multiplicity of Deities, gave to some of them but a mean origin, but of Liberty, they tell us she was the daughter of Jupiter and was sent from heaven to Earth, to bless Mankind.—Consider my fellow Englishmen **LIBERTY** as your best, your choicest inheritance, and as such, prize it highly and hold it firmly; —Again Consider, how wonderfully this your birthright has been preserved, How many the attempts how strong the efforts which have been made to wrest the Blessing from your hands: Providence has yet preserved it and the sacred fire
though

though Languishing, is not Extinguished, Yet Further I would say, it may be lost by your carelessness and inattention. Tyranny and Oppression gain ground by degrees, they steal imperceptibly over a Land and cast their chains upon the People ere they are aware,

Do you ask me how you are to stand fast, I would answer you thus, by adhering closely to Revolution Principles: Study well the history of your Country: Learn well your birthright as Englishmen: be not content with merely knowing it yourselves, but teach it to others: instil a Love of Liberty into the minds of your rising Offspring and let your Little ones learn to Lisp out the Praises of Freedom. I would say to you once more, *Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made you free, by uniting against the Enemies of your common Cause:* Guard against the insinuations of those, who for their own Sakes, would mislead you: Titled Sycophants and pensioned placemen are but indifferent friends to Liberty, they are more apt to join with those who would

“ Make us Slaves,

“ And tell us 'tis our Charter.

Whilst on the one hand I would say avoid all intemperate heat, I would on the other add,
UNITE

UNITE, PERSEVERE, AND YOU ARE FREE. In the Assertion of your rights, let prudent caution form your Sentiments, let manly fortitude Support them, whilst unremitting perseverance leads you through every Danger and teaches you to account lightly of Hardships sustained in the Cause of Glory, I would now for a moment drop the Politician and speak as a Divine;—It is a fact asserted in the Scriptures, “that all Men are the Servants and Slaves of Sin, and that the Wages of Sin are Death.”—The same Scriptures tell us, “that the Gift of God is eternal Life, through his Son.” Now Sirs, if in this state of Slavery you live and die of its wages ye must be partakers. Blessed be our God, that in the dispensation of the Gospel, Christ appears Proclaiming Liberty to the Captive, may you hear his Voice making your Souls Free. To you who of this Liberty have been made partakers, I would say, be on your guard against a Legality of Spirit, stand fast in the Liberty with which Christ has made you free. May this Spiritual freedom be the portion of all who now hear me.

Of this Liberty possessed, you shall rise in life infinitely above what are called its exalted Characters: in Death you shall enjoy tranquility
and

and peace and after Death you shall be admitted
to a Citizenship in the New Jerusalem, *the*
Kingdom of Christ above, where his church shall
be ultimately compleat in him and the whole
body be Eternally

ONE AND INDIVISIBLE.

H Y M N. I.

I.

FOR all thy Favours mighty Lord,
We Britons bless thy Holy Name ;
Still faithful to thy promised Word,
In every age thou art the same.

II.

THY wonders far surpass our Praise,
Thy goodness Lord, exceeds our thought ;
And Britain through succeeding Days,
May sing, lo ! what the Lord hath wrought.

III.

WHEN Papal Power, was rising high,
And threatened every Precious right ;
Thy helping hand, O Lord was nigh,
And Brought, Salvation to the fight.

IV.

FOR *Freedom* given, we sing thy Praise,
For Rights preserv'd we bless thy Name ;
And may we to our rising Race,
By Thee upheld, Preserve the same.

HYMN, I.

I.

LORD we adore thy liberal hand,
Yet ask thy pitying eye,
O chase oppression from the Land
And hear the poor Mans Cry.

II.

LET no complaining in the Street,
Or voice of woe be heard;
But by the Men of ev'ry State,
Be thy great Name rever'd.

III.

MAKE our Exactors Righteousness,
And make our rulers peace,
So shall thy favor Britain bless,
And our Commotions Cease

HYMN. III

I.

IT comes it comes the glorious day,
When Christ with universal Sway;
hall loud proclaim from pole to pole,
Freedom to ev'ry Captive Soul.
Freedom, &c.

II.

THEN shall the oppressor lose his sway,
And Clouds & darkness flee away,
Whilst christ proclaims from pole to pole,
Freedom to every, Captive Soul.

III.

MAY every Nation hear his voice,
And Afric in the Sound rejoice,
Whilst Christ proclaims from pole to pole,
Freedom to every Captive Soul.

FINIS;

7

8

9